



Climbing Guide to Gamkaberg Nature Reserve near Calitzdorp

update
May 2013

Gamkaberg offers good quality, single and multi-pitch, trad climbing with a doddle of an approach and easy descents in beautiful, pristine surroundings, with nice, comfortable camping. A very relaxing, family-friendly venue.

Very Important: there are potential sensitivities from reserve management about climbing at Gamkaberg, and so it is best to keep a very low profile about climbing there. Don't openly display climbing equipment around the office, camp site or walk-in and don't tell staff that you are rock climbing, simply say that you are hiking. Gamkaberg is a pristine and beautiful wilderness environment. Please climb with the respect that this place deserves at all times.

Don't even think about bolting anything!

Gamkaberg is a nature reserve in the Little Karoo managed by Cape Nature and is located south of the R62 between Calitzdorp and Oudtshoorn, fairly near (east of) the Calitzdorp Hot Springs. The reserve offers extremely nice (but pricey) Eco Lodge bush camp accommodation, as well as a Stables dormitory and a small ordinary camp site - all beautifully maintained and well equipped. You can also make day visits. For accommodation info and a map of how to get there see: <http://www.capenature.co.za/reserves.htm?reserve=Gamkaberg+Nature+Reserve>. The reserve (but not the climbing) was also featured in the March – May 2010 issue of SA Mountain Sport.

The climbing is in Tierkloof on very good quality, hard quartzitic sandstone similar to Montagu but with many beautiful, vertical finger cracks. Access is a short, level walk along a manicured hiking trail which runs up the kloof. A total of 35 routes have been opened so far, with potential for many more, both within the developed area and higher up the kloof.

There is lots of shade in the kloof, many of the climbs are on shady south faces, and the kloof remains cool during hot weather. Depending on recent rainfall, there may be very little water in the kloof, but there is usually drinking water around the weir - but best to take all drinking requirements.

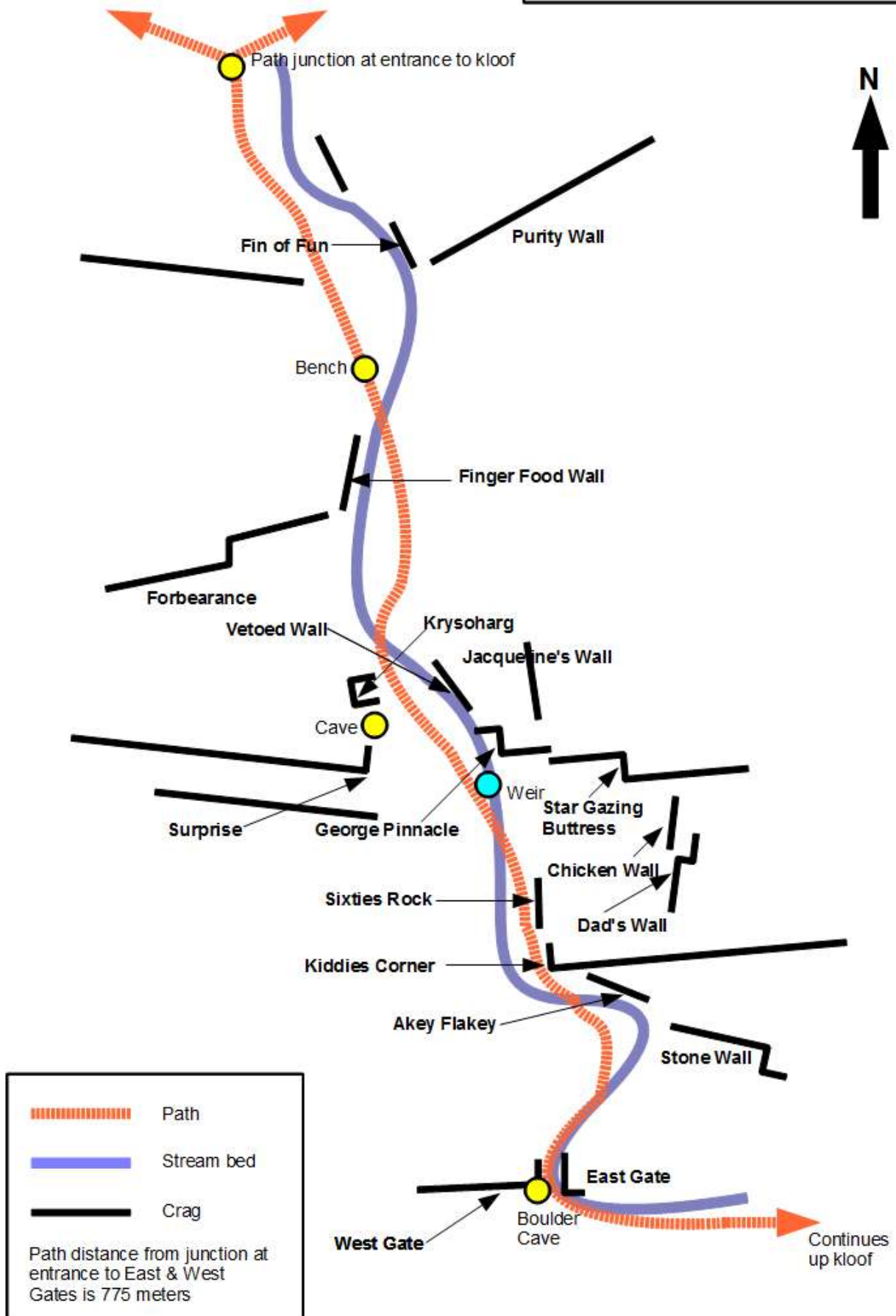
Descent from most routes: pick a tree and rapp off – there are suitable trees on ledges everywhere on the crags. Some established routes have tat where there is a lack of a suitable tree. Some crags are easy to walk off.

Approach: From the camp site and reserve reception (GPS: S33.670838 E21.888915) take the most direct route up the Pied Barbet walking trail which runs up the wide kloof (start up the road, take first hiking trail right, at first fork take a left to avoid going up the side of valley, pass a bench off to the right, then take next right to stick to the bottom of the valley). A less than 2 km stroll takes you to the start of the narrow part of Tierkloof – leave the Pied Barbet trail to follow the trail up the kloof towards Oukraal and the Overhang. A minute or 2 up the kloof you reach the bench (GPS: S33.68577 E21.89821). If you are staying at the Tierkloof Eco-lodge it is only a 5 minute walk to the bench.

Climbs are ordered sequentially from the bottom of the kloof moving upstream. The location of each sector on the true left or right bank of the stream (ie. going downstream) is given.

Please forward information about new routes, or any comments, corrections etc about RD to Johann at johannlanz@vodamail.co.za

Climbing in Lower Tierkloof Gamkaberg



FIN OF FUN AREA, *Right*

1. Twist Your Hip, Crack Your Back (16) ** 25m

FA: Hagen Liebberger & Chris Morgan-Wilson

Climbs the easy-angled fin left of the Fin of fun and continues up the corner crack behind it.

2. Fin of Fun (14) *** 25m

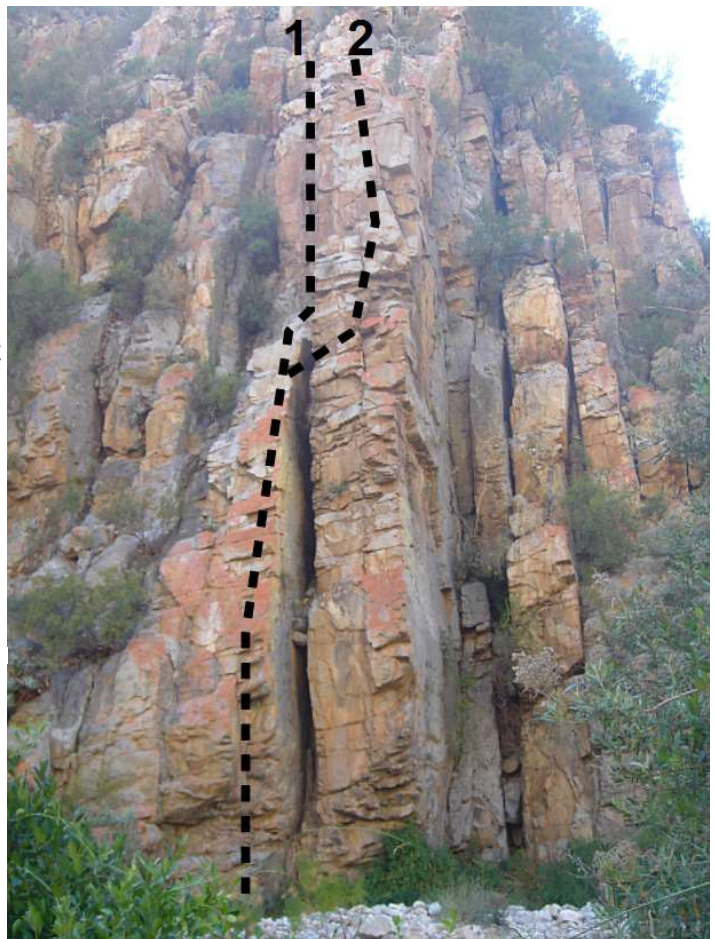
FA: Johann Lanz & Michael van der Marel April 2013

Shares start with unknown on left fin, then at the top of it step across right onto main fin and climbs it to the top.

3. Nappy Rash (16) ** 20m

FA: Paul Lochner & Johann Lanz April 2003

On the square pillar upstream of Fin and at the base of the scree running up to the Purity Wall. Climb more or less on the right hand arête of the pillar, from the stream bed



Fin of Fun



Nappy Rash

PURITY WALL, *Right*

The Purity wall is the awesome looking wall that you look directly up at from the bench.

1. Purity (21) **** 25m

FA: Johann Lanz & Paul Lochner April 2011

Climb the leftward tending break up the main part of the lower wall and exit left onto the arête.

The longer rightward tending break awaits a brave ascent (and/or some pegs).



Purity

FINGER FOOD WALL, *Left*

The wall rising from the stream bed with multiple vertical cracks on it, on the opposite side and slightly upstream of the *Fin of Fun*.

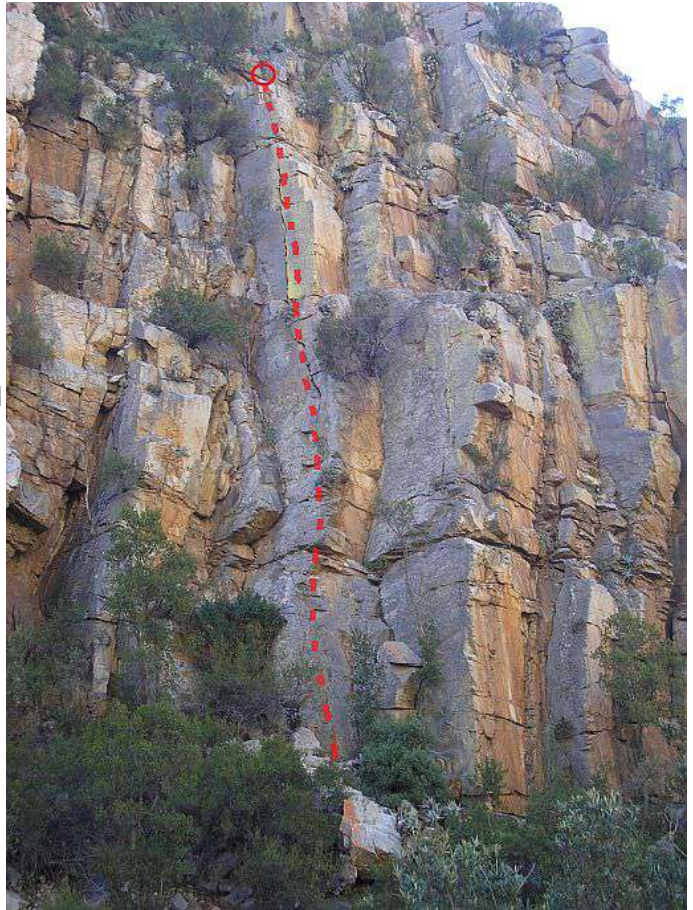
1. Un-named

FA: *Greg and Cheryl Devine*

2. Finger Food (16) *** 38m

FA: *Johann Lanz & Paul Lochner April 2003*

This route is located towards the left hand side of the wall. Aim for the immaculate looking, two-toned crack above and then climb it.



Finger Food



Forbearance

FORBEARANCE WALL, *Left*

The higher, south facing wall upstream of *Finger Food*.

1. Forbearance (21) ****

FA: *Johann Lanz & Paul Lochner April 2011*

Start: Scramble up from the stream bed and left along sloping ground below the first tier of the wall. Start towards the left side of the wall.

1. 20m (17): Climb the clean, thin, rightwards tending corner crack to the top. The next pitch starts across the ledge to the right.
2. 25m (21): Climb the leftward tending crack and break starting in the middle of the wall. After about 15 meters, move slightly right into the slightly rightwards tending splitter finger crack and climb it to the ledge.
3. 20m (19): Climb straight up into the vertical finger crack running up the middle of the face and climb it to the top.

Note: Pitches 2 and 3 can easily be combined into one long pitch.

VETOED WALL, *Right*

1. Lovely Little Climb (13) *** 25m

FA: *Greg and Cheryl Devine January 2012*

The crackline on the left.

2. Crystal Cove (18) ** 25m

FA: *Chris Morgan-Wilson rope-solo March 2012*

Up the face and find the crystal alcove. The sting is in the tail.

3. Vetoed (18) ** 25m

FA: *Chris Morgan-Wilson and Greg Devine March 2012*

Climb the crack to the roof then out left of the roof and up

4. Insert (19) *** 25m

FA: *Johann Lanz April 2013*

Aims for the good looking finger crack on the steep, pock-marked wall. Start up the corner, under the roof, move into the finger crack and continue above the ledge directly up the arête (easier if you go up the face on the left).

5. Vitzenstats (13) 25m

FA: *Chris Morgan-Wilson and Greg Devine March 2012*

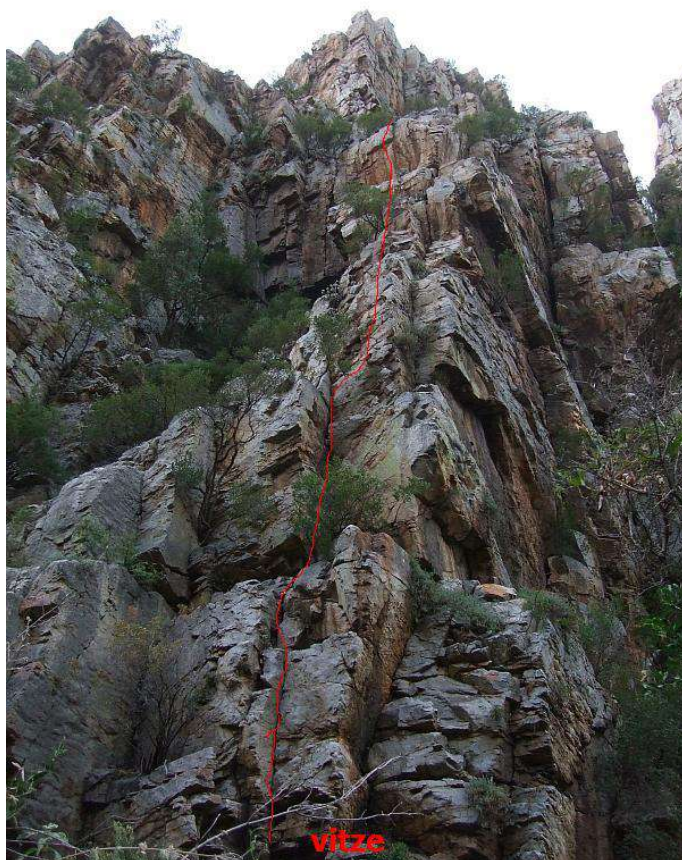
Climb the stepped arête below the pillar on Jacqueline's wall.



Insert



Vetoed Wall, left hand side



Vitzenstats

JACQUELINE'S WALL, *Right*

The wall directly above the Vetoed Wall. Access by climbing a route up Vetoed Wall or scramble up gully to the left of it, and go right, up ledges where it steepens.

1. **Gone B4ur21 (18) ***½ 25m**

FA: Chris Morgan-Wilson & Greg Devine March 2012

Climb the finger crack and move right under the roof to share the end with *Night Walker*.

2. **Night Walker (17) *** 25m**

FA: Chris Morgan-Wilson & Greg Devine March 2012

Up the crack to the roof, move out to the right and up to a ledge stance.

3. **Pink Poison (20) ***½ 25m**

FA: Chris Morgan-Wilson & Michael van der Marel April 2013

Climbs the clean finger crack just to the right of Night walker.

4. **Track Marks (17) *** 30m**

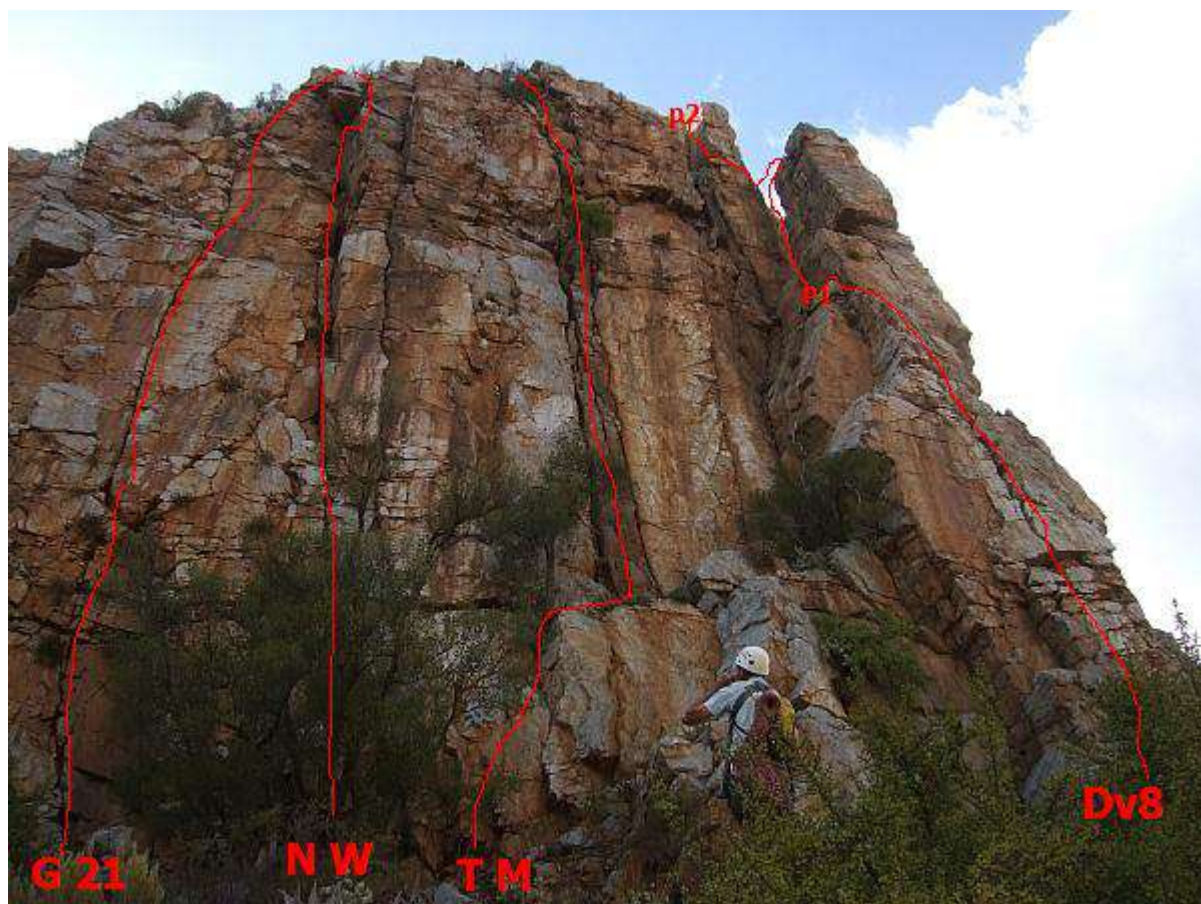
FA: Chris Morgan-Wilson rope-solo March 2012

Climb the twin cracks.

5. **Dv8 (17) ******

FA: Chris Morgan-Wilson & Greg Devine March 2012

1. 20m (16): Climb the front of the pillar to stance on ledge.
2. 15m (17): Climb through the gap to place pro then up the gap onto top of pillar, step onto main wall, move left and up into open book then up to the top.



Jacqueline's Wall

KRYSOHARG ALCOVE, Left

A square, recessed alcove, close to the path.

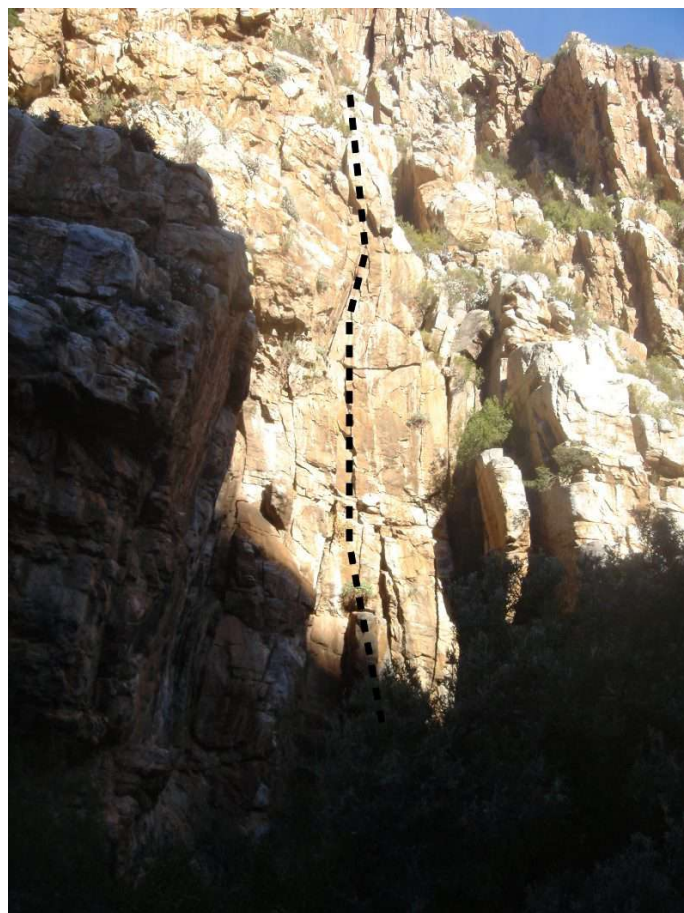
1. Krysoharg (18) * 25m

FA: *Chris Morgan-Wilson & Hagen Liebberger March 2012*

Climbs the main crack line on the back of the alcove.



George Pinnacle



Krysoharg

GEORGE PINNACLE AREA, Right

The area is characterised by the short flat-topped pinnacle that stands slightly away from the main wall and is about 25 metres high.

1. George Pinnacle (14) * 30m**

FA: *Greg and Cheryl Devine January 2012*

Climb the upstream-facing corner/chimney/gap affair to the top of the pinnacle. From the top, step onto the main wall and climb up to a recess.

2. Muffin Remnants (14) * 25m**

FA: *Tony Lourens & Willie Koen Jan 2012*

About 30 meters right of George Pinnacle. Climb the corner crack and crack above.



Muffin Remnants

SURPRISE AREA, Left

Right corner of the big side gully, looking up.

1. Surprise (14) ** 25m

FA: *Greg and Cheryl Devine Jan 2012*

The climb has as its objective the square-cut break halfway up. Climb over the easy rock until the fun starts at the square, smooth chimney. Break out left at the top of this. A surprise indeed. Abseil off the obvious tree 10m short of the top.



Surprise

STAR GAZING BUTTRESS, Right

The towering, square-cut buttress high above the weir.

1. Kungfu Babe (19) ****

FA: *Chris Morgan-Wilson & Michael van der Marel April 2013*

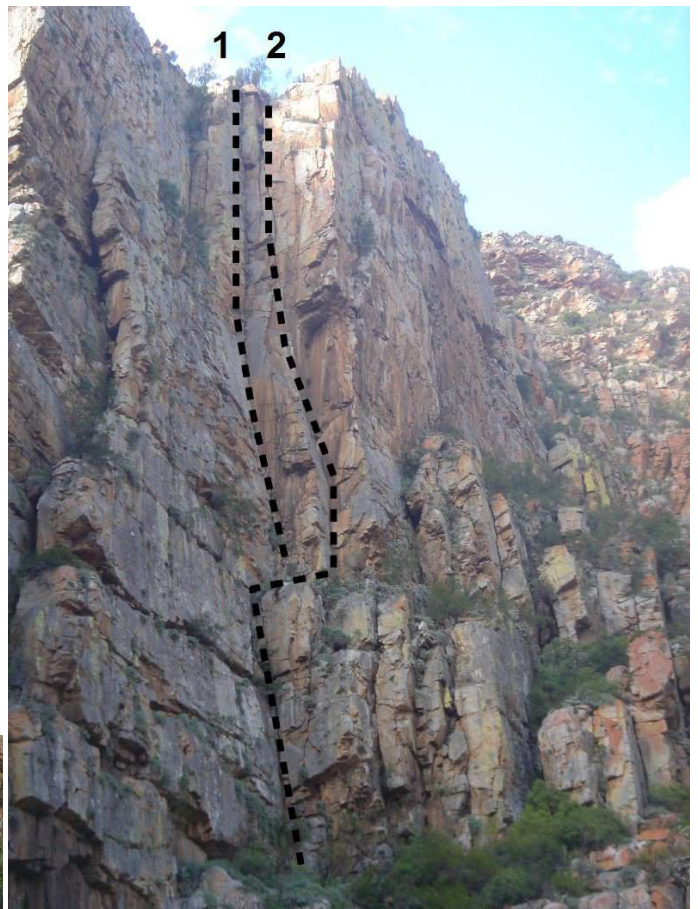
1. 20m (15): Climb the main corner crack to the big ledge - shared with *Focal Length*.
2. 50m (19): Continue straight up the corner crack.

2. Focal Length (19) ****

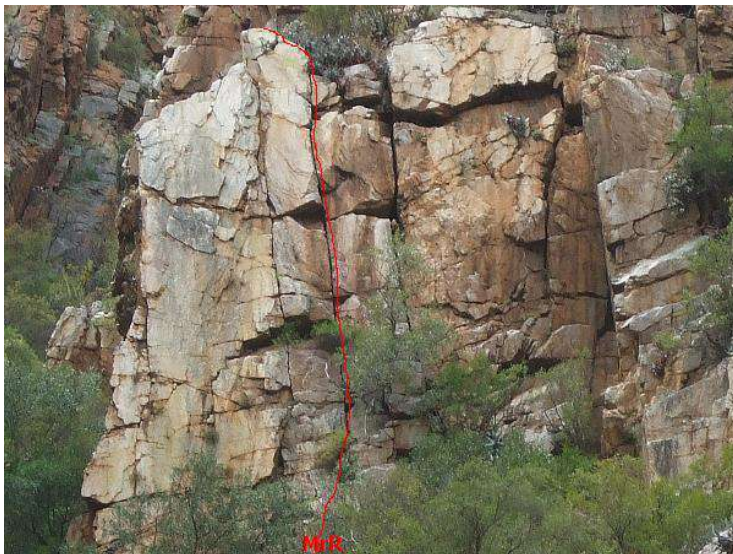
FA: *Johann Lanz & Michael van der Marel April 2013*

1. 20m (15): Climb the main corner crack to the big ledge.
2. 50m (19): Climb the clean, red open book corner system about 10m right of the main corner. Go through the small roof and above it go left onto the arête, past a spike that sticks out of the wall. Climb straight up the hand crack above, which is about 3m right of the main corner. 50 meter ropes get you to a good stance on big chock stones, about 4 meters below the top.

Note: 50 meter ropes just get you back to the ledge from the tree at the top of the crack.



Star Gazing Buttress



Chicken Wall

CHICKEN WALL, Right

The first, short wall immediately to the right of the gully that runs up from the kloof past the Star Gazing Buttress.

1. Mr Rooster (18) * 25m

FA: *Chris Morgan-Wilson rope-solo March 2012*

Start on the LHS, then move over to the middle crack

DAD'S WALL, Right

Above and right of the Chicken Wall

1. Dad's not gone (19) ****

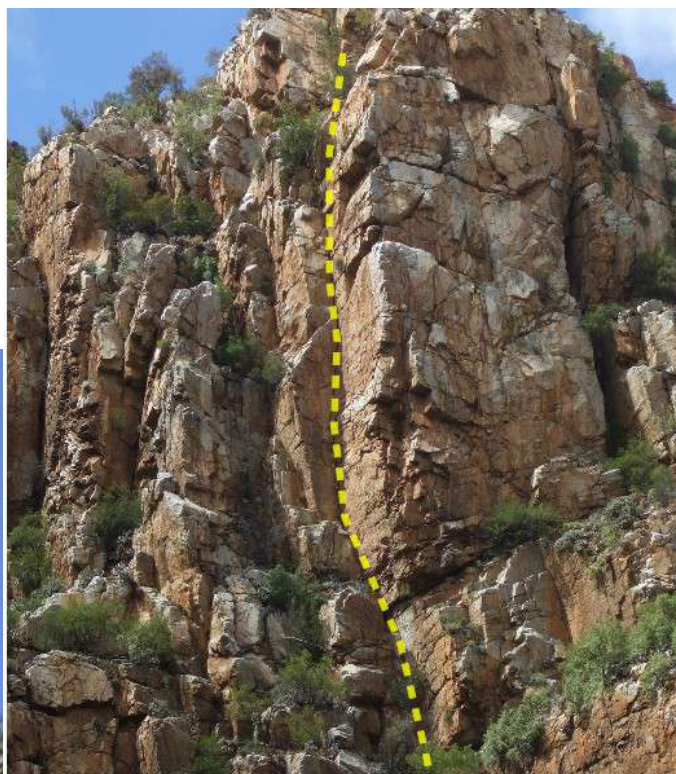
FA: *Chris Morgan-Wilson May 2013*

1. (14): Up the double crack to the ledge below the open book.
2. (19): Up the open book, move right to the top.

Note: 3 or 4 big cams needed (BD 4)



Sixties Rock



Dad's not gone

SIXTIES ROCK, Right

Where the path enters under a thick canopy, close to the vertical rock wall.

1. Sixties Rock (14) ** 25m

FA: *Greg and Cheryl Devine Dec 2011*

Start at a small nose at ground level. (Cairn). Climb straight up to a ledge with a horizontal tree. Two lines then present, a corner and a crack. The crack was climbed to the top. Walk off in a downstream direction.

KIDDIES CORNER, Right

40 meters upstream of Sixties Rock. Path also amongst trees close to the wall.

1. Wail (13) ** 18m

FA: *Sebastian Lanz (top-rope) April 2011*

Climb the right hand arête and face just left of it.

2. A-plus (15) ** ½ 18m

FA: *Matthew Lochner (top-rope) April 2011*

Climb straight up the middle of the face, to the right of the Wail arête.

3. Lightning flash (9) * 15m

Climb the crack in the face to the right of the corner, right of A plus, and continue up left past ledges.



Kiddies Corner

ACHEY FLAKEY AREA, *Right*

In the corner of the stream bed

1. Achey Flakey Fart (14) * 25m**

FA: Tony Lourens & Willie Koen Jan 2012

Climb the corner / flake crack and continue through the overhang above.



Achey Flakey

STONE WALL, Right

Superb, steep and very sustained climbing on an inspiring sweep of rock. **Note:** the abseil from the tree at the top is just more than 30 meters.

1. Touchstone (23) ***** 28m (grade needs confirmation)

FA: Johann Lanz December 2011

From the ground climb left up the cubbyhole rail, then takes the crack immediately left of *Written in stone* and follows it through where it pinches into a seam (crux). Near the top where the wall steepens and the crack goes diagonally right, climb straight up on good holds and a clean exit onto the ledge (shared with *Written in Stone*).

2. Written in Stone (22) ***** 28m (grade needs confirmation)

FA: Johann Lanz December 2011

Takes the crack from the very right hand edge of the ledge & overhang cutting into the bottom left hand side of the wall, several meters above the ground. Near the top where the wall steepens and the crack goes diagonally right, cut slightly left and up on good holds and a clean exit onto the ledge (shared with *Touchstone*).

There are 2 combination variations on the above 2 routes. Crossing from one crack system to the other at the X on the topo allows you to either miss the crux of both routes (starting on *Touchstone*, and then moving right) to climb **Stone Ease (20)**;

or climb both cruxes (starting on *Written in Stone*, and then moving left) to climb the very sustained **Double Stone (23)**.

3. Open Project

4. Stone Wallah (16) *** 25m

FA: Sebastian & Johann Lanz December 2011

The crack that starts up a corner and then through an overhang and straight up the face of the column that stands immediately to the right of the Stone wall.

5. Stone Edge (18) *** 25m

FA: Johann Lanz December 2011

The arete immediately right of *Stone Wallah*. Start up the tree and step onto the arete.

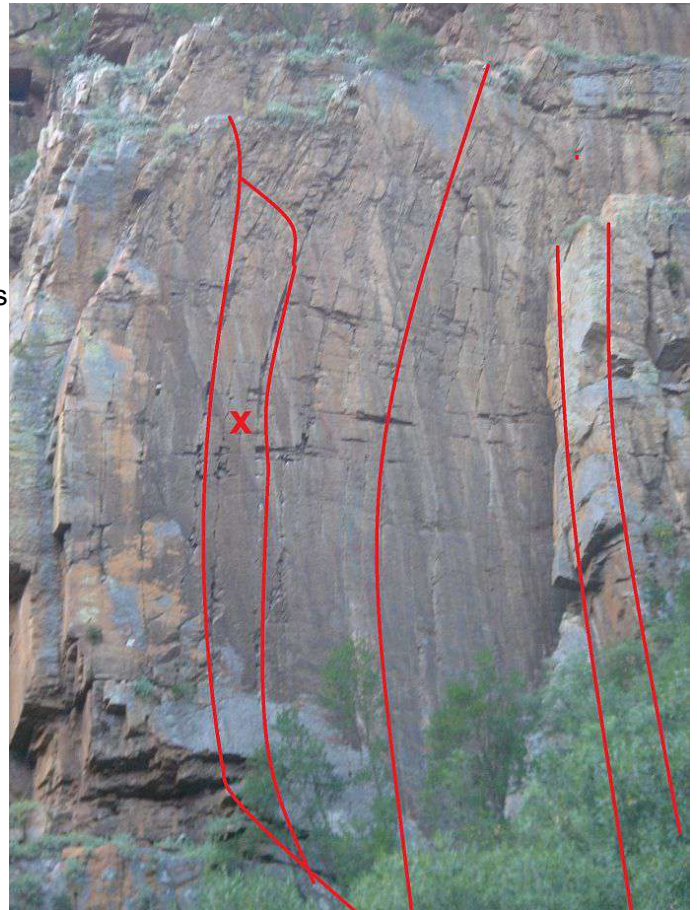
WEST GATE, Left

At the narrowest point in the kloof where a rock buttress on each side of the stream forms "gates".

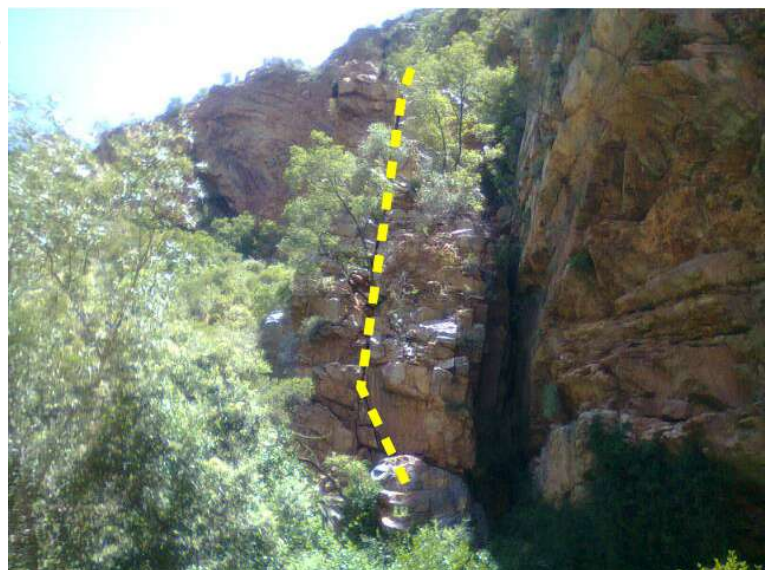
1. Cavegirl Crack (14) * 25m

FA: Greg and Cheryl Devine Dec 2011

Just upstream of the cave there is a sloping buttress with a wide bushy crack going all the way up. Climb straight up the crack, watching out for some scree halfway. The rock looks a bit dodgy but in fact isn't and yields a surprisingly nice route. Scramble off the ledge in an upstream direction and down the gully.



The Stone Wall



Cavegirl Crack